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# THE SERVICE OF NURSING

BY HELEN F. HANSEN, A.B.

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True education means the full development of all human faculties, and the preparation of an individual for the duties and responsibilities of the vocation chosen as a life work. This is true of nursing as of any other branch of study, but in order to achieve success, the pupil nurse should possess a combination of culture and also a desire for service.

The growth of this desire for service and its relation to culture are easy to trace. In ancient Greek and Roman history we do not find the minds of the people permeated with a desire for service. Physical power and intellectual cunning were their idols, as is readily seen by the fact that they chose, as their deities, a warring Mars, and an intriguing Jupiter rather than an all-loving God. These countries made wonderful progress. Law, art, and literature were developed to a marvelous degree, but the root of all progress was selfishness. Little did these ancient citizens realize the great truth Carlyle emphasizes in his *Sartor Resartus*—"For neither this man nor that man, but all men, make up mankind, and their united tasks the task of mankind."

This truth first became apparent when the doctrines of Christianity were introduced into the world. Gradually despotism began to be wiped out; sacrifice took the place of bigotry. There were many examples of sacrifice both among individuals and groups of people. The Sisters of Charity, by their self-forgetfulness, by their untiring endeavors to alleviate human misery, and by their organization and advancement of ideas, have illustrated clearly how a desire for service can overcome obstacles, no matter how great, and bring hope and new life where all seemed darkness before.

This movement was, however, not allowed to advance unhindered, for there followed a period of disorganization in which all efforts of these pioneer nurses seemed to have been in vain. The truths for which they had struggled, the great service they had performed for mankind still were not lost, but were, for the time, being pushed into the background, ready to blossom forth with increased splendor at an opportune time.

This impetus came at last, when the period of reconstruction established itself. Probably no part of this period more thoroughly emphasizes the spirit of service which prevailed so profoundly among our early nurses, than does that in which the deaconess movement had its development. Innumerable institutions erected throughout

the world for the betterment of mankind have been organized by women who had entered the order of deaconesses and countless others have been modeled on these institutions. Had not the longing for a life of complete service been paramount in the minds of these women, it would have been impossible for them to enter training under the most unattractive surroundings and at a time when few people believed that any form of honest labor could be dignified.

It was at Kaiserswerth, the earliest of these deaconess institutions that Florence Nightingale received nursing training. In her life, we see what culture and education, combined with this same desire for service, were able to accomplish. Not all her education and culture, not all her power of organization, not her almost superhuman desire to help others, but a combination of all these qualities, enabled her to accomplish what she did, both during the Crimean war and after.

It was also a full development of these characteristics that has inspired the foundation of the many hospitals and benevolent institutions scattered throughout our own country, in which, we hear and read on all sides, people are giving up their lives to service.

However, especially now that the war is over, many capable individuals are wasting their energies, commending themselves and the world in general for the past, instead of realizing that the past is an earnest of much greater good, necessary to be done in the future. During the war, large numbers of enthusiastically patriotic women entered the training schools of this country to help combat the shortage of nurses at home and abroad. Now, we hear on all sides, probably with much justice, that these women, by giving up their work at a critical moment have made their sacrifice and service insufficient, as the need for expansion and development in all kinds of nursing and social work has increased instead of diminished since the signing of the armistice and the ending of the war.

There has been a constant appeal in the last few years, for women of culture to enter hospital training schools. Many have done so, great numbers of whom have not realized the full meaning of the terms service and culture, and by their lack of such understanding have evoked severe criticism of the nursing profession in many quarters. Matthew Arnold very aptly says that culture includes not only the "scientific passion," but also a passion for "doing good," the latter of which is too often unemphasized in our schools and colleges, and sometimes entirely lost sight of.

Education should not be sought for self-development alone, but should be considered as a trust to better enable one to help others. Therefore, it is a call to service, first of all, which should cause one

to decide to enter hospital training. After spending a number of years, in or out of school, in intellectual development, one realizes that God has made him for a purpose, and that one has powers, which, when developed, will make him a worthy factor in the world. To accomplish this, self-comfort must often be put in the background. We see this unselfish trait throughout history in characters whose lives have been of real service to the world.

Considering these facts, those of us who have entered training schools must ever bear in mind that we have entered upon a life of service and of sacrifice, determining to live that life,

Not alone in power and knowledge, but by year and hour  
In reverence and in charity.

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## CONSTRUCTIVE WORK WITH THE MENTALLY DISABLED

BY V. MAY MACDONALD, R.N.

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With the general upheaval consequent on the war, many nurses have been shaken out of the rut of private nursing, and are unwilling to settle back into it again. They are realizing now that private duty is an excellent experience for the first year or two after graduation, but an unsatisfying type of work for an indefinite period. Contact with the manifold needs of disabled soldiers, and experience of that real satisfaction which comes from being of service to many people in the course of a day, have made nurses more keenly aware of the wider opportunities that come to those engaged in a community type of service. Many nurses on return from overseas have been heard to say, "I don't know what I am going to do next, but it will not be private nursing." This is a healthy discontent so long as it leads to definite steps to obtain the training and experience needed for other forms of work. Classes in public health nursing are crowded as never before, and are the gateway to many important fields of work.

Of all the newer opportunities developing to-day, none is more keenly interesting or more promising of rapid growth than that of psychiatric social service. Certainly none gives a richer harvest of that satisfaction which belongs to work for a group of patients who have waited long for a recognition of their needs. The claims for service to those who have justly been called, "of all God's suffering creatures, surely the most pitiful," are at last being heard.

Many nurses share in the too general feeling of disinclination to come in contact with mental disease. These are women who have not